

## NEWS RELEASE

**INDIANA  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT**



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Joseph E. Kernan, Governor  
Alan D. Degner, Commissioner

### **\* PUBLIC NOTICE \***

## ***Workers at New Paris' Steelcase, Inc. receive federal aide***

Indianapolis, Ind. – The Indiana Department of Workforce Development announced today that the U.S. Department of Labor has ruled that employees of Elkhart County's Steelcase, Inc. are eligible to receive federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).

The TAA program, which is administered at the state level by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, is made available to workers who are displaced due to foreign imports or shifts in production out of the country. In order for dislocated workers to be eligible for TAA benefits, a company executive, union representative or three former employees requesting these benefits must file a petition with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and it must be approved before these benefits can be released.

Headquartered in Michigan, Steelcase Inc. operates a plant that produces wood office furniture in New Paris. The corporation is currently in the process of downsizing its workforce, impacting Elkhart County workers. In anticipation of potential future layoffs, company officials filed a petition on behalf of its workers seeking TAA certification. On April 12, 2004, the USDOL concluded its investigation and determined that shifts in production to both Mexico and Canada have caused layoffs in other Steelcase facilities. As a result, Steelcase employees in New Paris, who were separated from employment on or after April 5, 2003 through the two years from the date of certification have been deemed eligible for assistance.

The TAA program provides a variety of benefits and services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for a variety of re-employment services, job search and relocation allowances and training. In addition, weekly trade re-adjustment allowances may be payable to eligible workers following the exhaustion of unemployment insurance benefits.

Additionally, the USDOL authorized certification for alternative trade adjustment assistance (ATAA) for older workers who lost jobs at Steelcase. A significant number of workers at the company are 50 years old or older and possess skills that are not easily transferable, the USDOL found. It also found that because of the workforce's age, skill level and the competitive conditions within the industry, finding comparable employment within the same field will be difficult. Due to those conditions, older workers may choose between regular TAA benefits or a wage subsidy of 50 percent of the difference between their new salary and old salary, up to \$10,000.

Information sessions for workers on how to apply for TAA and ATAA are currently being planned and will be announced at a later date. Eligible parties may also contact Sandra Moehling in Elkhart's WorkOne center at 574/ 295-0105 or any WorkOne center for more information.

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